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INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 000366

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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN SECURITY COUNCIL CHIEF ON U.S. RELATIONS,  
LEBANON, KOSOVO, GEORGIA, AFGHANISTAN

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR WILLIAM J. BURNS: 1.4 (B, D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: IN A JANUARY 30 MEETING WITH THE  
AMBASSADOR, IGOR IVANOV ENCOURAGED A VISIT BY DNSA HADLEY AND  
INCREASED CONGRESSIONAL CONTACT. HE FLAGGED THE JANUARY 31  
VISITS OF BANDAR BIN SULTAN AND SAAD HARIRI TO MOSCOW, IN  
ORDER TO DISCUSS THE SAUDI INITIATIVE TO STABILIZE LEBANON.  
(BANDAR WAS IN TEHRAN JANUARY 30.) IVANOV DETAILED  
COMPLAINTS OVER AHTISAARIS PLAN FOR KOSOVO, AND UNHAPPINESS  
WITH GEORGIA'S HANDLING OF THE RETURN OF THE RUSSIAN  
AMBASSADOR. HE NOTED IRANIAN CONCERN OVER TALIBAN AND AL  
QAIDA INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN. (IRANIAN CONSULTATIONS  
REPORTED SEPTEL.) END SUMMARY

ENGAGING THE U.S.  
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12. (C) IN A JANUARY 30 MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, RUSSIAN  
SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARY IGOR IVANOV STRESSED THE NEED TO  
INCREASE THE TEMPO OF HIGH-LEVEL BILATERAL ENGAGEMENT. HE  
FLAGGED HIS INTENTION TO EXTEND AN INVITATION TO DEPUTY  
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER HADLEY TO VISIT IN THE  
FEBRUARY/MARCH TIMEFRAME. IN THE WAKE OF THE MID-TERM U.S.  
CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, IVANOV HAD ENCOURAGED DUMA CHAIR  
BORIS GRYZLOV TO EXPAND CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS, AND WELCOMED  
NEWS OF A POSSIBLE VISIT IN FEBRUARY BY REP. LANTOS, WHOM HE  
AGREED TO MEET. IVANOV HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED THE PROPOSED  
AUGUST VISIT BY SENATOR LUGAR AND POSSIBLY FORMER SENATOR  
NUNN WITH ROSATOM DIRECTOR KIRIYENKO, AND WAS CONFIDENT THAT  
THE GOR WOULD AVOID A REPEAT OF LAST YEAR'S BOTCHED  
SCHEDULING. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF  
EXPANDING PARLIAMENTARY CONTACTS, AND WELCOMED FM LAVROV'S  
EFFORTS TO SCHEDULE CALLS ON SPEAKER PELOSI AND SENATE  
MAJORITY LEADER REID.

LEBANON: BANDAR AND HARIRI TO MOSCOW  
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13. (C) IVANOV ALERTED THE AMBASSADOR TO THE JANUARY 31  
VISIT TO MOSCOW BY SAUDI NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR BANDAR BIN  
SULTAN, FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS OF BANDAR'S CONSULTATIONS IN  
TEHRAN FOCUSED ON BROKERING A SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE SINIORA  
GOVERNMENT AND HIZBOLLAH. IVANOV WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO A  
FULL BRIEFING ON BANDAR'S MEETING WITH THE IRANIAN  
LEADERSHIP, WHICH INCLUDED SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS OF THE  
COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT, ROLE OF HIZBOLLAH, AND HARIRI  
TRIBUNAL. HE COMMENTED THAT THE GOR WAS BROADLY SUPPORTIVE  
OF THE SAUDI EFFORT TO MANAGE SUNNI-SHIITE TENSIONS IN  
LEBANON. THE GOR ALSO HAD INVITED SAAD HARIRI TO MOSCOW FOR  
URGENT CONSULTATIONS, AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT SOMETHING CONCRETE  
WOULD EMERGE FROM THE DISCUSSIONS. IVANOV PRAISED THE  
EFFORTS BY SAUDI KING ABDULLAH TO HOST A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE  
PALESTINIANS AND HAMAS.

14. (C) THE AMBASSADOR RAISED THE RESOLUTION OF KOSOVO'S FINAL STATUS AND FLAGGED THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD ATTACH TO THIS ISSUE IN HER UPCOMING MEETING WITH FM LAVROV. THE AMBASSADOR PRAISED UN SPECIAL ENVOY AHTISAARI'S FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH BELGRADE AND PRISTINA AND WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN ANOTHER ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS FOLLOWING THE FEBRUARY 2 PRESENTATION OF HIS REPORT. THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT THE CURRENT SITUATION IN KOSOVO WAS UNSUSTAINABLE, WITH A CLEAR PATHWAY TO INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO REQUIRED. THE US SOUGHT TO CONSULT WITH THE GOR, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE CONSENSUS OF THE CONTACT GROUP WAS MAINTAINED AND THAT A SHOW-DOWN IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WAS AVOIDED. THE AMBASSADOR INFORMED IVANOV OF A POSSIBLE VISIT BY SPECIAL ENVOY WISNER.

15. (C) WITH THE CAVEAT THAT LAVROV HAD THE LEAD ON KOSOVO, IVANOV IMMEDIATELY RAISED THREE OBJECTIONS TO THE AHTISAARI PLAN:

-- THE THREAT OF KOSOVAR ALBANIAN VIOLENCE WAS A SHAM. KOSOVAR EMOTIONS WERE CONTROLLABLE BY THE WESTERN POWERS, SINCE A BASIS FOR VIOLENCE DIDN'T EXIST: THE KOSOVAR ALBANIANS WERE NOT SUFFERING DISCRIMINATION, REPRESSION, OR PURGES. THEY WERE THE DOMINANT FORCE IN THE PROVINCE, UNDER NO DURESS FROM THE SERB AUTHORITIES.

-- AHTISAARI'S REFUSAL TO WAIT FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW SERB GOVERNMENT WAS A "PROVOCATION." AHTISAARI NEEDED TO SPEAK WITH THE NEW LEADERSHIP AND THERE WAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A SOLUTION WAS STILL NEGOTIABLE. A MAJORITY OF SERBS UNDERSTOOD THAT KOSOVO WAS A LOST CAUSE, THE SERB GOVERNMENT HAD PEACEFULLY CEDED MONTENEGRO "WITHOUT DRAMA OR VIOLENCE," AND THE PROSPECT OF INTEGRATION INTO THE EU REMAINED A LURE. TO IGNORE THE SERB GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTED AN "INFRINGEMENT" OF SERBIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. IVANOV COMPLAINED MORE GENERALLY THAT THE SERBS WERE TREATED AS "SECOND CLASS" CITIZENS, WITH SCANT INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION PAID TO SERBIAN REFUGEES FROM FORMER REPUBLICS.

-- THE KOSOVO PRECEDENT WAS REAL AND UNWELCOME. IVANOV REITERATED THAT THE GOR SOUGHT A RESOLUTION THAT DID NOT CREATE ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL CRISES. WHILE THE WEST SAID KOSOVO WAS NOT A PRECEDENT, IT WOULD BE, JUST AS MONTENEGRO HAD BEEN. IT WOULD PUT RUSSIA IN A POSITION OF HAVING TO RECOGNIZE ABKHAZIA OR TRANSNISTRIA -- DISPUTED TERRITORIES THAT HAD CONDUCTED THEIR OWN REFERENDUMS, PRODUCING OVERWHELMING MAJORITIES IN FAVOR OF INDEPENDENCE. WHILE IVANOV UNDERSTOOD THE IMPATIENCE OF THE WEST REGARDING AN OPEN-ENDED MANDATE OVER KOSOVO, THE ISSUE WAS NOT READY TO BE RESOLVED AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE, IF IMPOSED, WOULD RESULT IN "CONTINUOUS CONFLICT" IN CENTRAL EUROPE. THE ISSUE, IVANOV STRESSED, DID NOT HAVE TO BE RESOLVED ON AHTISAARI'S WATCH.

GEORGIA: "A STRANGE PEOPLE"

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16. (C) THE AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO LINK KOSOVO'S STATUS TO THAT OF THE FROZEN CONFLICTS AND EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE CURRENT DEBATE COULD BE USED TO WORSEN THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA. IVANOV COMPLAINED THAT THE GOG HAD REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE RETURN OF THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR FOR WHAT IT WAS: A GOODWILL GESTURE. INSTEAD, THE LITANY OF GOG COMPLAINTS THAT IT WAS INSUFFICIENT, OR MERELY FOR POLITICAL SHOW, DID LITTLE TO CREATE A MOOD IN MOSCOW TO GO FURTHER, FASTER. IVANOV CHARACTERIZED THE RECENT PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES ON THE YEAR-OLD INTERCEPTION OF A RUSSIAN CITIZEN SMUGGLING HEU ALSO AS A PROVOCATION. EVERYTHING HAD BEEN HANDLED QUIETLY; THE GOR HAD CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATION, AS HAD THE FBI. NOW THE STORY WAS RESURRECTED PUBLICLY IN THE CONTEXT OF LITVINENKO. THE GEORGIAN LEADERSHIP, HE FUMED, WERE "A STRANGE PEOPLE." IVANOV TOOK APPARENT PLEASURE IN THE GOG DISCOVERY THAT IRAN WOULD ONLY SELL GAS AT WORLD MARKET -- THAT IS, RUSSIAN -- PRICES. HE CONTRASTED RUSSIA'S UNSUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY WITH GEORGIA TO PROGRESS WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF MOLDOVA, WHERE NEGOTIATIONS WERE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SAME LEVEL OF NOISE

AND EMOTION.

IRAN CONCERNS OVER AFGHANISTAN  
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¶7. (C) IN THE CONTEXT OF A BROADER DISCUSSION OF IRAN (SEPTEL), IVANOV NOTED THE IRANIAN LEADERSHIPS CONCERN OVER DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN; IN PARTICULAR, THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF THE TALIBAN AND AL-QAIDA LEADERSHIP AMONG THE LOCAL POPULATION.

COMMENT  
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¶8. (C) IVANOV'S COMMENTS ON GEORGIA AND KOSOVO ARE A BELLWETHER OF HOW LAVROV WILL APPROACH THESE ISSUES IN HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY. WITH GEORGIA, WE WILL NEED TO CONTINUE TO STRESS QUIET DIPLOMACY OVER PUBLIC SPATS -- NOTING OUR OWN EFFORTS TO KEEP GOG RHETORIC MUTED.

BURNS